

NEWS RELEASE

Date: November 14, 2001

For: Immediate Release

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***Youth and Adults Invited Locally to
Contribute Ideas in National Youth Effort***

Milton, Florida - Youth and adults who want to contribute to an effort to collect the nation's best ideas in youth development can join the Santa Rosa County Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century on Friday, December 7, 2001 from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm at Pensacola Junior College - Milton Campus, Room 4902.

As a part of the centennial of the national 4-H youth development movement, 4-H is leading conversations in all 3,067 counties of our nation. In the Local Conversations, youth and adults are being asked to describe what youth need to achieve success in their lives. Those who want to participate should contact the local 4-H office at 623-3868 and ask for Vickie B. Mullins.

The Local Conversation will lead to a State Conversation in each of 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and five territories. Marking the 4-H centennial year in 2002, in February two thousand youth and adults will meet in Washington, D.C. for the National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century.

Providing sponsor support for the Local for the Local Conversation are Pensacola Junior College - Milton Campus, Santa Rosa County 4-H Teen Council, and the CFWC Milton Womens Club.

"This may be the largest single undertaking in the first 100 years of 4-H," says Vickie B. Mullins, Santa Rosa County 4-H Coordinator. "We're creating a blueprint for youth programs in every community in America. It's personally exciting to be involved in something that will have a dramatic impact on the young people of this community,

state, and nation.”

Patterned after successful national conferences on small business and aging, the National Conversation will capture the best ideas and programs for youth development in the 21st Century and present them in a report to the President of the United States, his cabinet, and Congress. Moving ahead, 4-H intends to engage the nation in positive youth development programs, addressing youth problems, building youth skills, generating civic involvement, and creating better communities.

“All of us have a stake in how youth develop in the future,” says Donald T. Floyd, Jr., president and CEO of National 4-H Council. “We’re looking for involvement by youth, parents, and professionals from all sectors of the community.”

The conversations will use discussion guides developed by a design team of youth and adults representing the Cooperative Extension System, 4-H, other youth development organizations, academia, and National 4-H Council.

“We want the nation to know that we’re not building a granite monument for our 4-H Centennial,” says Floyd. “Instead, in the tradition of 4-H, we’re creating an action plan for families, youth leaders, and communities across the nation to guide us in the coming century.”

The Local, State and National Conversations on Youth Development will result in planning tools and a national curriculum reflecting the strategies that have been the most successful in helping young people succeed. In addition, young people will be making a civic commitment to be involved in their local communities through the Power of Youth Pledge Campaign.

4-H is one of the nation’s most diverse organizations, and includes people from all economic, racial, social, political, and geographic categories. There are no barriers to participation. Young people are given the opportunity to engage in activities that hold their personal interest, while being guided by adult volunteers. Local 4-H agents are youth development professionals who provide direction and program leadership in each county as part of the nationwide Cooperative Extension System.

Originally focused on agricultural projects, 4-H has followed the needs and interests of young people into urban and suburban communities. Like other leading

modern organizations, 4-H draws strength from its participants by sharing decision-making responsibilities at levels ranging from local clubs to national programs.

In Santa Rosa County, over 2,500 youth and 250 volunteers are involved in 4-H programs. More than 6.8 million youth are involved in 4-H programs annually. 4-H is part of the Cooperative Extension System, which conducts programs in all 3,067 counties of the United States, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and five territories. The Cooperative Extension System is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture, state land-grant universities, and local county governments. National 4-H Council works to advance the 4-H youth development movement to build a world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change. National 4-H Council is a nonprofit 401(c)(3) organization. The 4-H name and emblem are protected under 18 U.S.C. 707.

A variety of 4-H volunteer opportunities are available in Santa Rosa County. For more information, contact Vickie B. Mullins, 4-H Coordinator, at the Santa Rosa County Extension Office (623-3868 or 939-1259, ext. 1360). Extension Service programs are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.